

Message Text

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R 130030Z AUG 76
FM AMEMBASSY PORT MORESBY
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1704
INFO AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
AMEMBASSY SEOUL
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
CINCPAC HONOLULU

C O N F I D E N T I A L PORT MORESBY 0823

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, PDIP, ETRD, PP, KS
SUBJ: SOUTH KOREAN AMBASSADOR COMMENTS ON PNG

1. SOUTH KOREAN AMBASSADOR JAE SUL LEE, RESIDENT IN JAKARTA, PRESENTED HIS CREDENTIALS TO PNG GOVERNOR-GENERAL AS ROK'S FIRST AMBASSADOR TO PORT MORESBY ON AUG. 11. HE CALLED ON ME ON AUG. 12 AND MADE FOLLOWING OBSERVATIONS.
2. LEE DISCUSSED THE KOREAN QUESTION AT GREAT LENGTH WITH GPNG, FOUND PRIME MINISTER SOMARE AND FONMIN KIKI TOO PREOCCUPIED WITH OTHER MATTERS TO FOCUS VERY LONG ON KOREA BUT BELIEVED HE MADE SOME INROADS WITH FONSEC SIAGURU AND FIRST ASST SEC SABUMEI. LEE DOES NOT BELIEVE PNG WILL NECESSARILY VOTE IN SUPPORT OF SOUTH KOREA AT UNGA, BUT BELIEVES THERE IS BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF ROK'S POSITION AND SOME WILLINGNESS TO ACCEPT HIS RATIONALE.
3. GPNG GAVE LEE TO UNDERSTAND THEY WOULD PREFER TO DISCUSS KOREAN QUESTION WITH REPS OF NORTH AND SOUTH KOREA, RATHER THAN WITH REPS OF OTHER GOVTS. (THIS

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EMBASSY, THE JAPANESE EMBASSY, A VISITING JAPANESE

FONOFF TEAM AND TO A LESSER EXTENT THE AUSTRALIAN HICOM ALL APPROACHED DFAT ON THE KOREAN QUESTION LAST YEAR.) LEE SAID HE HOPED I WOULD OCCASIONALLY BRING UP THE KOREAN QUESTION CASUALLY WITH DFAT WHEN DISCUSSING OTHER MATTERS, BUT NOT MAKE A FORMAL DEMARCHE ON SUBJECT.

4. WILL DEPT PLEASE NOTE ABOVE PARA AND TAKE IT INTO CONSIDERATION IN DRAFTING INSTRUCTIONS TO THIS POST ON KOREAN QUESTION.

5. LEE AGAIN MADE REQUEST TO ESTABLISH RESIDENT MISSION IN PORT MORESBY BUT WAS TOLD NO. HE THEN SUGGESTED AN ECONOMIC LIAISON OFFICE WITH A STAFF OF TWO OR THREE KOREANS WHO WOULD HAVE DIPLOMATIC STATUS. GPNG SAID THEY WOULD THINK ABOUT THIS BUT THEIR ATTITUDE WAS SO NEGATIVE (BECAUSE OF PRECEDENT THIS WOULD ESTABLISH) THAT LEE EXPECTS REFUSAL.

6. LEE INVITED FONMIN KIKI TO VISIT SEOUL. KIKI ACCEPTED, AND, NOTING THAT HE HAD ALREADY RECEIVED AN INVITATION FROM NORTH KOREA, PROPOSED TO VISIT BOTH CAPITALS ON SAME TRIP. TO LEE'S AMUSEMENT, KIKI PROPOSED THAT HE FLY TO PYONGYANG, THEN DRIVE ACROSS THE DEMILITARIZED ZONE AND DOWN TO SEOUL. KIKI WILL MAKE THIS SUGGESTION TO THE NORTH KOREAN DELEGATION COMING HERE PROBABLY THIS MONTH, AND IF THEY REFUSE, KIKI WILL VISIT ONLY SEOUL, LEE SAID.

7. I POINTED OUT TO LEE THAT THE SOLOMON ISLANDS WERE SCHEDULED TO BECOME INDEPENDENT WITHIN 12 MONTHS AND WERE EXPECTED TO JOIN THE UN. I SUGGESTED THAT LEE OR OTHER ROK REPS MIGHT FIND IT USEFUL TO TOUCH BASE IN HONIARA BEFORE INDEPENDENCE. LEE THOUGHT THAT WAS AN EXCELLENT IDEA, AND SAID HE WOULD PURSUE IT WITH HIS GOVERNMENT.
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